

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00
CIAE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 IO-13 ACDA-12 EB-08 COME-00 DLOS-09
/092 W

-----129714 131546Z /53

O R 131455Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6147
INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
USMISSION USNATO
CINCUSNAVEUR VAIHINGEN GE
USNMR SHAPE
DIA WASHDC
SDECDEF WASHDC
JCS WASHDC
CNO WASHDC
CINCLANT FORFOLK VA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 3392

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI, PEPR, PINT, NO, UR
SUBJECT: UNAUTHORIZED LANDINGS BY SOVIET SHIPS

REF: (A) STATE 179809 (NOTAL) (B) OSLO 3245

1. EMBOFF IN JULY 12 MEETING WITH HELGE VINDENES, HEAD
OF MFA NORTHERN AFFAIRS WORKING GROUP AND PER TRESSELT,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF MFA LEGAL OFFICE, DISCUSSED SHIP INCIDENT
DESCRIBED REF B AS WELL AS ADDITIONAL RECENT ENTRIES OF
USSR SHIPS (SEE BELOW).

2. THE JULY 12 NORWEGIAN PRESS HAD REPORTED A FURTHER
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INCIDENT; THE SPOTTING JULY 11 BY A NORWEGIAN TRAWLER CAPTAIN
OF A SOVIET FREIGHTER ANCHORED JUST OFF SHORE AT
KINNARODDEN, EAST OF THE NORTH CAPE AND VERY NEAR AREA OF
PREVIOUS INCIDENT. THE PRESS REPORTS THAT SUBSEQUENT TO
OVERFLIGHTS BY NORWEGIAN FIGHTERS AND THE ARRIVAL OF A HELI-
COPTER, THE FREIGHTER,
SOME HOURS LATER, STEAMED OUT OF NORWEGIAN TERRITORIAL

WATERS.

3. THE MFA OFFICIALS SAID THAT THERE HAD IN ADDITION BEEN TWO OTHER RECENT SOVIET ENTRIES, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO FOUR. ONE SUCH INCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN BERGEN WITHIN THE LAST 2 WEEKS, WHERE A SHIP CAME INTO PORT BECAUSE OF HIGH SEAS. THIS INCIDENT APPEARS TO BE LEGITIMATE, SINCE BAD WEATHER HAD BEEN REPORTED IN THAT AREA. THE REMAINING INCIDENT TOOK PLACE AT VARDOE ON JULY 12 WHERE A SOVIET SHIP HAD ENTERED PORT TO PUT A SICK CREW MEMBER ASHORE.

4. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE VARIOUS SHIPS REQUESTED AND RECEIVED PERMISSION TO ENTER THE VARIOUS HARBORS IS NOT AS YET, IN THE LAST THREE INCIDENTS, FULLY KNOWN TO THE MFA.

5. IN CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF, VINDENES AND TRESSELT STATED THAT, AT PRESENT, PENDING RECEIPT OF MORE CONCRETE INFORMATION FROM LOCAL POLICE AUTHORITIES, VIA THE JUSTICE MINISTRY, THE MFA WAS NOT MAKING ANY ASSESSMENTS OF THE INCIDENTS.

6. VINDENES STATED THAT WHILE HE DID NOT WISH TO "TRIVIALIZE" THE MATTER, IT WAS IMPORTANT NOT TO LET THE INCIDENTS BE BLOWN UP OUT OF PROPORTION. THE MFA OFFICIALS

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SAID THAT IF THE SOVIET SHIP ENTRIES COULD BE DESCRIBED AS A PROBE, IT WAS ONLY AS A PROBE OF TECHNICAL MATTERS, SUCH AS DATA ON THE COASTAL FACILITIES AND/OR NORWEGIAN READINESS, PROCEDURES AND ABILITY TO RESPOND. TRESSELT STATED THAT HE DID NOT CONSIDER THE MOVES TO BE POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. THEY WERE NOT, HE SAID, TESTS OF RESOLVE.

7. THE MFA OFFICIALS SAID THAT THE NORWEGIAN MILITARY AUTHORITIES ALSO FEEL THAT IT IS TOO EARLY TO ASSESS SOVIET INTENTIONS IN THIS MATTER.

8. TRESSELT, WHO IN HIS LEGAL OFFICE CAPACITY HAS PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS MATTER AT PRESENT, CONFIDENTIAL

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WENT TO SOME LENGTHS TO DOWNPLAY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE INCIDENTS. HE STATED THAT THESE CASES WERE NOT SIMILAR TO AIRSPACE VIOLATIONS. HE SAID THAT NORWAY RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF INNOCENT PASSAGE AND THE RIGHT OF COMMERCIAL VESSELS TO CALL AT PORTS. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED IF TRESSELT VIEWED INNOCENT PASSAGE AS APPLYING TO WATERS SO INTERNAL AS THOSE INVOLVED, LATTER GAVE A SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS ANSWER. VINCENES, HOWEVER, STATED THAT INNOCENT PASSAGE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE AN ISSUE IN THIS CASE. TRESSELT THEN SAID THAT THE SOVIET ENTRIES DID NOT NECESSARILY INVOLVE TERRITORIAL VIOLATIONS IN THEMSELVES, ALTHOUGH THE QUESTION OF CONSENT BY LOCAL AUTHORITIES, OR THE LACK OF IT, DID RAISE QUESTIONS.

9. TRESSELT SAID THAT SUCH SOVIET ENTRIES WERE NOT UNPRECEDENTED IN NORWAY. WHEN EMBOFF OFFERED AS HIS IMPRESSION THAT THERE DID NOT APPEAR TO BE MUCH IN THE WAY OF PRECEDENT INVOLVING SUCH ACTIONS BY SOVIET VESSELS ELSEWHERE THAN NORWAY, TRESSELT SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THERE MIGHT INDEED BE SIMILAR CASES INVOLVING SOVIET SHIPS. EMBOFF THEN SAID THAT HE WOULD, IF GON WERE INTERESTED, ASK DEPARTMENT TO LOOK INTO MATTER, IF FEASIBLE. (PARA TWO REF A WAS SUBSEQUENTLY PROVIDED TO VINDENES ON A CONFIDENTIAL BASIS ON JULY 13.)

10. THE MFA OFFICIALS ALSO POINTED OUT THE GLOMAR EXPLORER INCIDENT OF SOME YEARS BACK, WHICH, THEY SAID INVOLVED MORE SERIOUS ACTIVITY (I.E. DRILLING ON THE CONTINENTAL SHELF). WHEN EMBOFF SUGGESTED THAT PARALLEL WASN'T EXACT, SINCE DRILLING

ACTIVITY TOOK PLACE EIGHTY MILES FROM SHORE AND THAT,
AT THE TIME THERE EXISTED A VALID DIFFERENCE OF OPINION
ON SHELF REGIME, VINDENES READILY AGREED.

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11. COMMENT: IN THE ABSENCE OF FIRM DATA, THE MFA IS
CLEARLY RELUCTANT TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS REGARDING SOVIET
MOTIVES. IT IS PROBABLE, HOWEVER, THE GON WILL HAVE
TO ASSESS THE USSR ACTIONS FROM A POLITICAL AS WELL
AS A PURELY LEGAL VIEWPOINT, SINCE THE PRESS MAY MAKE
THIS A MAJOR STORY IN AN OTHERWISE QUIET LOCAL SUMMER.
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